

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

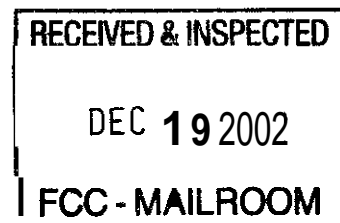
GROVER G. NORQUIST

PRESIDENT

December 17, 2002

The Honorable Michael Powell
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

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RE: WC Docket No. 02-361

Chairman Powell,

I had the distinct honor of serving on the Advisory Commission on Electronic Commerce, whose report (as approved by Congress) extended the moratorium on taxing Internet purchases and eliminated taxes on Internet access fees. I **am** exceedingly proud to have helped encourage the growth and development of the World Wide Web by keeping it free from excessive government interference, and **am** therefore very concerned by the possibility that the FCC may allow the same standard access charges currently applied to traditional circuit-switched calls to be imposed on Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) communications.

Since the process of conducting VoIP communication is the same as any information exchange carried out via the Internet – indeed, it often uses the same infrastructure as all other public Internet traffic – VoIP communications are clearly not standard telephone calls, and accordingly should not be subject to standard telephone charges. If they were to become subject, the chilling effect would send shivers throughout the industry.

Moreover, an adverse decision would substantially obviate much of the efforts undertaken by the Advisory Commission and Congress on behalf of America's Internet users and service providers. They have been well served by the innovations and choices afforded to them as a direct result of the entrepreneurial climate fostered by **our** current – and supremely sensible – hands-off policies. The FCC should stay the course instead of firing an opening salvo against maintaining a dynamic and boundless Internet.

Onward,

Grover Norquist

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